

31 years ago—Medicare must be protected and continue to provide quality health care that seniors can rely on.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule: the Committee on Banking and Financial Services; the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities; the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight; the Committee on International Relations; the Committee on the Judiciary; the Committee on National Security; the Committee on Resources; the Committee on Science; and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 3603, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3603) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, disagree to the Senate amendments, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico? The Chair hears none and without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. SKEEN, MYERS of Indiana, WALSH, DICK- EY, KINGSTON, RIGGS, NETHERCUTT, LIVINGSTON, DURBIN, Ms. KAPTUR, and Messrs. THORNTON, FAZIO of California, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JONES). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under

clause 4 of rule XV. Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 2 p.m. today.

ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3868) to extend certain programs under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act through September 30, 1996.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3868

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENTS.

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act is amended—

(1) by amending section 166 (42 U.S.C. 6246) to read as follows:

"AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

"SEC. 166. There are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 1996 such sums as may be necessary to implement this part.";

(2) in section 181 (42 U.S.C. 6251) by striking "June 30, 1996" both places it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "September 30, 1996";

(3) by adding at the end of section 256(h) (42 U.S.C. 6276(h)) "There are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 1996 such sums as may be necessary to carry out this part.";

and

(4) in section 281 (42 U.S.C. 6258) by striking "June 30, 1996" both places it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "September 30, 1996".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3868.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SCHAEFER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, this bill reauthorizes certain provisions contained in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. Specifically, this bill assures that if there is an energy emergency during the August recess, the President's authority to drawdown the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the ability of U.S. oil companies to participate in the International Energy Agreement without violating antitrust laws is preserved.

It is important that the United States maintain a strong Strategic Petroleum Reserve to protect American citizens from shutoffs in imported oil. Similarly, the President's authority to

order a drawdown of that stored oil in an emergency must also be maintained. This bill assures the President's drawdown authority is kept intact until the end of the fiscal year.

This bill does not address the issue of maintaining adequate levels of oil in the Reserve. Over the past 18 months, I have been greatly troubled by the trend of selling oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to meet budgetary goals.

The Reserve is our first line of defense in an energy emergency. This energy security insurance policy for which we have paid over \$200 billion should not be squandered carelessly to meet short-term budgetary objectives.

I have directed staff to work on a long-term EPCA extension which would make it more difficult for the Reserve to be raided by people willing to sacrifice long-term energy security for short-term budget goals. In the meantime, this short-term extension of certain EPCA authorities protects Americans in the event of an energy emergency and gives us time to pass a long-term extension before the 104th Congress adjourns.

I believe these provisions of EPCA are too important for us to leave for August recess without reauthorizing them. While an energy emergency which would require the Reserve to be drawn down during August is unlikely, it is not impossible. Consider the implications of the recent terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia on our energy security. I believe this Nation must have the ability to use all its tools to deal with an energy emergency so I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this temporary reauthorization of the most important provisions of Energy Policy and Conservation Act, through September 30 of this year. While I would prefer a simple extension of EPCA—one that covered its State Energy Conservation programs and other authorities—I support this legislation because it ensures the United States and industry are able to fulfill their major emergency-related responsibilities. These include planning for international oil crises and management of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

I thank Chairman SCHAEFER for bringing this extension to the House floor, and I look forward to working with him in September to resolve the remaining issues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly am willing to work with my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], to extend this a bit further. We will have to sit down and decide on how we are going to do this. But we are giving the President the authority during the August recess in order to adapt to any emergency that might exist.